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MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ARABS.

From the 13th and 14th numbers of the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, just published, we extract the following interesting particulars relative to the manners and customs of the Arabs. We cannot bring to mind having ever before seen a regular and consecutive history of this extraordinary people, who, since the days of Ishmael, have continued to verify the prediction so early pronounced upon them, "that their hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against them." We have looked through these volumes, and can conscientiously recommend them as affording an accurate and interesting history of this ancient and at one time highly renowned people.

The wood engravings are of a very superior character, and the description of the very ancient city of Petra, and other interesting remains of that portion of our globe of which we read in sacred story, but of whose existence at present scarcely any thing was known until a very recent period; with a faithful delineation of the rise and fall of the Mohammedan empire, and the ravages of the Saracens, altogether render the volumes peculiarly well calculated for general perusal.

As a fair specimen of the work, we extract the description given by the compiler of the manners and customs of the present race.

THE HABITATIONS—DRESS—APPEARANCE.

In the domestic life of the Arabs there is little to attract the admiration of strangers. Their best houses display little exterior magnificence, and are still more deficient in point of internal accommodation. The tent forms the cherished home of the larger proportion of the inhabitants, and when they remove, they transport their dwellings with them. The height of this dwelling is generally seven feet, its length from twenty-five to thirty, and its breadth about ten. It is divided into two apartments, one for the men and the other for the women; and these are separated by a white woollen carpet of Damascus manufacture drawn across, and fastened to the three middle posts.

The furniture comprises pack-saddles, as well as those for riding, large water-bags made of tanned camel-skins, goat-skins for milk and butter, the little bag into which the hair or wool is put that falls from the sheep and camels on the road, the leather bucket for drawing up water from deep wells, a copper pan, coffee-pot, mortar, hand-mill, wooden dishes, the horse's feeding bag, and the iron chain which fastens their forefeet while pasturing about the camp. The Arabs seldom allow their women to be seen; and when a stranger is introduced, the cry of *tarik* (or retire) warns them instantly to disappear. It is reckoned a breach of decorum to salute a lady, or even to look her steadfastly in the face.

The ordinary costume of the Bedouins is extremely simple, consisting of a coarse cotton shirt, over which is worn a thin, light, white woollen mantle (*kombaz*), or sometimes of a coarser kind (the *abba*), striped white and brown. The wealthy substitute for this a long gown of silk or cotton stuff. The mantles worn by the sheiks are interwoven with gold, and may be valued at ten pounds sterling. The common *abba* is without sleeves, resembling a sack, with openings for the head and arms, and requires so little art in the making, that blind tailors earn their livelihood by this employment. Public taste, however, is occasionally more capricious, especially as to the head-dress, which is often expensive, and in a hot country must be extremely inconvenient. A fashionable Arab will wear near fifteen caps one above another, some of which are linen, but the greater part of thick cloth or cotton. That which covers the whole is richly embroidered with gold, and inwrought with texts or passages from the Koran. Over all there is wrapped a sash or large piece of muslin, with the ends hanging down, and ornamented with silk or gold fringes. This useless incumbrance is considered a mark of respect towards superiors. It is also used, as the beard was formerly in Europe, to indicate literary merit; and those who affect to be thought men of learning discover their pretensions by the size of their turbans.

In Mecca and other large towns the winter-suit of the higher classes is the *benish* or upper cloak, and the *jubbe*

or under one—both of cloth such as is worn in all parts of Turkey. The rest of their dress consists of a showy silk gown tied with a thin cashmere sash, a white muslin turban, and yellow slippers. In summer the *benish* is composed of a very slight silk stuff of Indian manufacture. Beneath the *jubbe* some wear a gown called *beden*, of white muslin, without lining or sleeves, and very short. The Meccaweens are remarkable for being cleanly and tasteful in their attire. On feast days and other public occasions their finery is displayed in the highest degree. The common shopkeeper, who walks about the whole year in his short gown with a napkin round his loins, appears in a pink-coloured *benish* lined with satin, a gold embroidered turban, rich silk sash, and *jambea*, with its scabbard ornamented with gold and silver. His wives and children are decked in the gaudiest colours; but after the feast is over the fine suits are laid aside. At home in his *dishabille*, the citizen seats himself near his projecting latticed window, holding in one hand the long snake of his Persian hookah, and in the other a small square fan made of the clippings of date-leaves, with which he drives away the flies. The women's dress is generally Indian silk gowns, and very large blue striped trousers reaching down to the ankles, embroidered below with silver thread. Over these they throw a sort of cloak called *habra* or *mellaye*, of black or striped silk, which covers the head, and has a graceful effect. The wealthy wear gold necklaces, bracelets, and silver ankle rings, while the poorer classes have similar trinkets of horn, glass, or amber. A ring is sometimes passed through the cartilage of the nose and hangs down upon the upper lip. The face is concealed with a white or light-blue piece of cloth called *dorko*, in which there are two holes worked for the eyes, but so large that the entire features may be seen. This piece of female vanity, according to Ali Bey, had better be spared, as the illusion of hidden charms is dispelled when a sight is obtained of their lemon-coloured complexions, their hollow cheeks daubed all over with black or greenish-blue paint, their yellow teeth, and their lips stained of a reddish tile colour. Though custom has reconciled them to these artificial means of heightening their beauty, their appearance is frightful and repulsive to strangers. It ought to be added, however, that in general they have fine eyes, regular noses, and handsome persons. The women at Lohcia wear large veils, which conceal their faces so entirely that only one of their eyes can be seen. In the interior, females are less shy than in cities; they converse freely with strangers, and have their countenance quite uncovered. The Arabs of the Hauran use a coarse white cotton stuff for their *kombaz* or gown, and have their keffie tied with a rope of camel's hair.

In winter the Bedouins throw over the shirt a pelisse made of sheep-skins stitched together. Many even in summer wear these skins, as they learn from experience that thick clothing is a defence from heat as well as cold. The dress of the women consists of a wide cotton gown of a dark colour, blue, brown, or black, and on their heads a kerchief. They go barefooted at all seasons, have the same affection for ornaments as their more polished rivals in the city, and employ similar arts to increase their beauty. Silver rings are much worn both in their ears and noses. Round their naked waists both sexes wear from infancy a leathern girdle, or cord consisting of four or five thongs twisted together, which they adorn with amulets on pieces of riband. They all puncture their lips and dye them with blue. Some of them also tattoo their cheeks, temples, forehead, breasts, arms, and ankles; and in these practices they are sometimes imitated by the men. Their eyes and eyelashes they paint black with a preparation of lead ore called *kohol*.

ACUTENESS OF THEIR SENSES.

From living constantly in the open air the Arabs acquire a remarkable acuteness in all their senses. Their sense of smelling, too, is extremely nice; hence their dislike to houses and towns, where they are disgusted with the nauseous exhalations which dense collections of people always generate. One of the most singular faculties they possess is the *athir*, or the power of distinguishing the footsteps of men and beasts on the sand, in the same manner as the American Indians discover imprints

sions made upon the grass. This art is carried to a perfection that appears almost supernatural.

Of their remarkable acuteness in hearing, some wonderful, but well attested anecdotes are told of those who act as pilots in the Red Sea. They know very nearly the time when ships from India arrive; and going down to the water's edge every night and morning, they lay their ear close to the surface for three or four minutes; and if the ship is not more than 2 or 2½ degrees distant (120 or 150 miles) they can hear the report of the signal gun, or feel the ground shake, upon which they immediately set off with their pilot boat.*

MODES OF WARFARE.

The Arabs are thoroughly inured to fatigue, and can endure hunger and thirst to a surprising degree. They sometimes travel five days without tasting water, and can discover a brook or natural spring by examining the soil and plants in the environs. They are dexterous horsemen, swift of foot, expert in handling their arms, and reckoned good marksmen since they became familiar with the use of the musket. Their most common arms are lances, sabres, matchlocks, pistols, and daggers. The shepherds have slings, with which they throw stones with great precision. The lance is made of wood or bamboo, twelve feet long, with an iron or steel pointed head.—Occasionally they are covered with workmanship of gold and silver, but are often without any ornament except two balls or tufts of black ostrich feathers placed near the top. In striking, they balance it for some time over their head, and thrust forwards, or backwards, if hard pressed by an enemy. Should a horseman be without a lance, he arms himself with a club or mace, which is made either wholly of iron or with a wooden handle. The foot-soldiers sometimes carry a small round target, made of the wild ox-hide, and covered with iron bars. Some wear iron caps and coats-of-mail, which either cover the whole body to the knees like a long gown, or reach only to the waist.

The Arabs drink little during meals; but when camel's milk is plentiful it is handed round after dinner. In their style of eating they are slovenly and disagreeable, if tested by the standard of Europeans. They tear the meat with their fingers, if not cut into small pieces before it is set down. A wooden bowl containing the melted grease of the animal is placed in the middle, into which every morsel is dipped. They thrust the whole hand into the dish at once, which is soon emptied of its contents, as they eat with great avidity. The food being always very hot, it requires some practice to enable a stranger to keep pace with the company and yet avoid burning the fingers. They have only two meals, breakfast in the morning, and dinner or supper at sunset. They wash their hands just before eating, but seldom after; merely licking the grease off their fingers, rubbing them on the scabbards of their swords or a corner of the tent covering.—Among the better classes table napkins are used, or a long linen cloth which is spread under their knees. The women and slaves eat what is left by the men; and it is seldom they have the good fortune to taste any thing but the fragments and refuse of the table. It is accounted a mark of respect towards superiors not to cat out of the same dish.

Domestic industry is little known among the Bedouins; the husband enjoys his amusements, while all the household care devolves upon his females. This degradation of the weaker sex is common to the Arabs with most other Asiatic nations. Women are regarded as beings much inferior to men, and to them exclusively all the labour and menial offices in the tent are assigned. In these employments there is sometimes a curious inversion of character—women work at the loom, while the men milk the cattle and handle the distaff, without regarding these ef-

feminate duties as in the least derogatory to their masculine dignity. The loom, called *nutoh*, is extremely simple, being merely two sticks fixed into the ground with a third placed across them.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

In courtship the Arabs often display a great deal of gallantry; for the constraint to which their women are subjected does not altogether prevent intrigues. But the opportunities of the lover's meeting or seeing his mistress are more rare; and the youth who is bold enough to trespass on the sanctuary of the *meharrem* finds his path encompassed with perils, battles, and death. The desert is the genuine theatre of those keen passions depicted in the Arabian tales, and perhaps the Bedouins are the only people in the East that can with justice be entitled true lovers. While Europeans merely languish and sigh, and while the townsmen compose amorous verses, the Bedouins sometimes cut and slash their arms with knives to show the violence of their affections. The pastoral life is favourable to forming acquaintances; and there are occasions when the youth of both sexes mingle in parties to sing and dance in the open space before or behind the tents.

The Arabs practice polygamy in common with most Eastern nations; but in general they are content with one wife, and rarely avail themselves of the legal privilege of marrying four. The rich espouse as many wives, and keep as many concubines, as they can maintain; though this luxury is too expensive to be generally adopted.—But those who restrict themselves to one wife make amends for this self-denial by indulging in variety, or entertaining at the same time a number of female slaves.

The marriage ceremony in general is very simple.—Negotiations commence with the father of the maiden, who usually consults the wishes of his daughter, and if her consent is gained the match takes place. The betrothed is seldom made acquainted with the change that is to take place in her condition. On returning home in the evening with the cattle, she is met at a short distance from the camp by her future spouse and a couple of his young friends, who carry her by force to her father's tent. If she entertain any suspicion of their designs she defends herself with stones, and often inflicts wounds on the assailants though she has no dislike to the lover; for the more she struggles, bites, kicks, cries, and strikes, the more she is applauded ever after by her own companions. Sometimes she escapes to the neighbouring mountains, and several days elapse before the bridegroom can find her; her female friends, meantime, being apprised of her hiding place, furnish her with provisions. When brought to her father's tent she is placed in the women's apartment, where one of the young men immediately throws over her an abba in the name of her future husband; and this is often the first time she learns who the person is to whom she is betrothed. She is then dressed by her mother and female relations in her wedding-suit, which is provided by the bridegroom; and being mounted on a camel ornamented with tassals and shreds of cloth, she is conducted, still screaming and struggling in the most unruly manner, three times round the tent, while her companions utter loud exclamations. If the husband belong to a distant camp the women accompany her; and during the procession decency obliges her to cry and sob most bitterly. These lamentations and struggles continue after marriage; and sometimes she repeats her flight to the mountains, refusing to return until she is found out, or is even far advanced in pregnancy.

Instead of receiving a marriage portion, the husband pays for his wife;—the sum varies according to rank and circumstances. Among the Arabs of Sinai it is from five to ten dollars; but sometimes thirty if the girl is handsome and well connected. At Mecca the price paid for respectable maidens is from forty to three hundred dollars (£8 15s. to £65 12s. 6d.); and on the borders of Syria young men obtain their masters' daughters by serving a number of years. Part of the money only is paid down, the rest standing over as a kind of debt, or as a security in case of divorce. The price of a widow is never more than half, generally but a third, of what is paid for a virgin.

* Captain Newland mentions an instance of a ship which, after firing the morning gun, ran 95 miles by the log; and when the pilot came on board in the evening he declared he had heard the signal at sunrise, on the faith of which he had put off with his boat.—*Philosoph. Transact.*, vol. lxii.

The sacred tie of marriage has but a slender hold on the Arabs, and may be dissolved on slight occasions at the pleasure of the husband. This facility of separation relaxes morality, though it reflects no dishonour on the woman or her family. She may be repudiated three or four times, and yet free from any stain or imputation on her character. It is not uncommon for a Bedouin before attaining the age of forty or forty-five to have had fifty wives. If the woman depart of her own accord she receives nothing, and even forfeits the unpaid portion of her dowry; but if she is turned away without any valid reason or proof of misconduct, she is entitled to a small sum of money, a camel, a goat, a copper boiler, and hand mill, with some other articles of kitchen furniture. This operates as a check upon the evil, and makes the customs in some degree correct the laws. The form consists of two words, "*Ent taleka!*" (Thou art divorced): when once pronounced it cannot be revoked; but it does not prevent the man from again marrying the same person, though she may in the interval have had several other husbands. Many instances occur of conjugal fidelity; and a Bedouin has been known in a fit of distraction to commit suicide on seeing his wife give her hand to a second bridegroom.

It is a received custom in every part of the desert, that a woman may entertain strangers in the absence of her husband; when this is not permitted, some male relation does the honours of the table. In certain parts of Nejed, a guest is welcomed by pouring on his head a cup of melted butter. Among the Azir tribes a practice exists not very consistent with our ideas of female honour: when a stranger arrives, he is required to be the companion of his hostess for the night, whatever be her age or condition; and it depends upon his rendering himself agreeable, whether he is to be honourably treated or dismissed with disgrace. This custom the Wahabees abolished; but on a representation being made by the tribe to Abdelazez, of the misfortunes that had befallen them for having abandoned the good old practice of their forefathers, permission was granted to honour their guests as before.

ROBBERS.

The Bedouins have reduced robbery to a science, and digested its various branches into a complete and regular system. In distant excursions every horseman chooses a companion (*sammal*), and both are mounted on a young and strong camel, carrying a provision of food and water, that the mare may be fresh and vigorous at the moment of attack. If the expedition is to be on foot, each of the party takes a small stock of flour, salt, and water. They clothe themselves in rags, to make their ransom easier if they should be taken. In this guise they approach the devoted camp under cloud of night, and when all are fast asleep. One of them endeavours to irritate the watchdogs; when they attack him he flies and artfully draws them off, leaving the premises unprotected. The *harami* then cuts the cords that fasten the legs of the camels, when they instantly rise from their kneeling posture, and walk away, as all unloaded camels do, without the least noise. To quicken their pace the tails of the foremost or strongest are twisted, and the rest follow at the same trot. The third actor in the robbery keeps watch at the tent-door with a heavy bludgeon, to knock down such of the inmates as may venture to interfere. In this manner fifty camels are often stolen, and driven by forced marches to a safe distance during the night. An extra share of the prey is always allowed to these three principal adventurers.

It frequently happens that the robbers are surrounded and seized; and the mode of treating their prisoners affords a curious illustration of the influence which custom, handed down through many generations, still exercises over the minds of these fierce barbarians. It is an established usage in the desert, that if any person who is in actual danger from another, can touch a third person, or any inanimate thing which he has in his hands, or with which he is in contact; or if he can touch him by spitting, or throwing a stone at him, and at the same time exclaim "I am thy protected!" the individual is bound to grant him the protection he demands. This law or point of honour is called the *dakheil*; and however absurd or capricious, it seems naturally to arise out of the scenes of violence, the ferocity of which it is calculated to soften.

THE MISS-NOMERS.

BY MRS. BARON WILSON.

FROM THE COMIC ANNUAL, BY MISS SHERRIDAN—JUST PUBLISHED.

Miss Brown is exceedingly fair,
Miss White is as red as a berry,
Miss Black has a grey head of hair,
Miss Graves is a flirt ever merry;
Miss Lightbody weighs sixteen stone,
Miss Rich scarce can muster a guinea,
Miss Hare wears a wig and has none,
And Miss Solomon is a sad ninny!

Miss Mildmay's a terrible scold,
Miss Dove's ever cross and contrary;
Miss Young is now grown very old,
And Miss Heavyside's light as a fairy!
Miss Short is at least five feet ten,
Miss Noble's of humble extraction;
Miss Love has a hatred towards men,
While Miss Still is for ever in action.

Miss Green is a regular blue,
Miss Scarlet looks pale as a lily;
Miss Violet ne'er shrinks from our view,
And Miss Wiseman thinks all the men silly!
Miss Goodchild's a naughty young elf,
Miss Lyon's from terror a fool,
Miss Mee's not at all like myself,
Miss Carpenter no one can rule!

Miss Sadler ne'er mounted a horse,
While Miss Groom from the stable will run;
Miss Kilmore can't look on a corse,
And Miss Ainwell ne'er levelled a gun;
Miss Greathead has no brains at all,
Miss Heartwell is ever complaining,
Miss Dance ne'er has been at a ball,
Over hearts Miss Fairweather likes reigning!

Miss Wright she is constantly wrong,
Miss Tickell, alas! is not funny;
Miss Singer ne'er warbled a song,
And alas! poor Miss Cash has no money;
Miss Bateman would give all she's worth
To purchase a man to her liking,
Miss Merry is shock'd at all mirth,
Miss Boxer the men don't find striking!

Miss Bliss, does with sorrow o'erflow,
Miss Hope in despair seeks the tomb;
Miss Joy still anticipates woe,
And Miss Charity's never "at home!"
Miss Hamlet resides in a city,
The nerves of Miss Staufast are shaken;
Miss Pretiman's berries not pretty,
Miss Faithful her love has forsaken!

Miss Porter despises all froth,
Miss Scales they'll make wait I am thinking
Miss Meekly is apt to be wroth,
Miss Lofty to meanness is sinking;
Miss Seymore's as blind as a bat,
Miss Last at a party is first;
Miss Brindle dislikes a striped cat,
And Miss Waters has always a thirst!

Miss Knight is now changed into Day,
Miss Day wants to marry a Knight,
Miss Prudence has just run away,
And Miss Steady assisted her flight;
But success to the fair—one and all!
No mis-apprehensions be making:—
Though wrong the dear sex to *mis-call*,
There's no harm, I should hope, in *MISS TAKING*.

DUBLIN:

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